

Dear Co-Chairs Cohen and Gresko, Vice-Chairs Slap and Palm, Ranking Members Miner and Harding, and members of the Environment Committee,

On behalf of NEMBA, mountain bikers and hikers located in Hebron, I write to ask you to support Raised House Bill 5291, An Act Authorizing Bonding for Bikeways, Greenways, and Recreational Trails.

This important bill would increase the bond authorization for the Recreational Trails and Greenways Grants program to \$6 million. In Fall 2021 DEEP issued a request for recreational trails proposals with only \$3 million available. It received 65 applications requesting over \$22 million, of which the highly ranked proposals alone totaled over \$7 million. Although \$3 million was granted to twenty worthy projects, we expect the ongoing need for investments in Connecticut's outdoor recreation infrastructure to continue.

What makes rural CT so wonderful for me is that I can walk/ride from my door to the Airline Trail and Salmon River area (Grayville MTB trails), ride past Devil's Hopyard and the nearby natural areas, and enjoy the outdoors. I love to take my dogs, my kids, or visitors from out of the state or the country to the forests of Connecticut. Please help to continue improving the natural areas of CT so we all can continue to enjoy and explore them.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter.

Sincerely,

Greg Howard

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